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Despite Rocky's best efforts:

Exposures erode the CIA

By CARL DAVIDSON

The CIA is being hurt by the continuing exposure of the secret police agency's criminal activities before the American people.

The damage is taking place despite the best efforts of Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to curb further revelations and strengthen the agency with "reforms."

"Every new publicized detail serves to weaken national security and unnecessarily expose intelligence operations to foreign governments," said the June 22 New York Times, summing up the views of the CIA inquiry's "critics."

The "details" are still forthcoming. Last week saw the release of more information on the CIA's foreign assassination plots, a battle in the House of Representatives to suppress criticism of the CIA, and the murder of a Mafia figure scheduled to testify on his work for the agency.

The White House did what it could to keep the lid on. President Ford, speaking through his press secretary, Ron Nessen, stated on June 17 that "it's not in the national interest to spew out unclear bits and pieces of incomplete information every day.... This is really not the orderly way to handle this."

The definition of "the orderly way" was outlined by CIA Director William Colby the following day. "In a statement released by the Central Intelligence Agency," reported the June 19 New York Times, "Mr. Colby referred to recent agency directives barring any CIA involvement in assassination plots and argued that public exposure of past actions would serve no useful purpose because United States policy now explicitly forbids such activity."

"I think there is positive harm to the reputation of the country," stated Colby, "to go into great detail on these

things." Colby's views, however, were quickly challenged by Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), head of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence:

"I don't accept that thesis," said Church, "We need to know what went on and the degree to which assassination was an instrument of foreign policy."

Thus the stage was set for continuing contention within the U.S. ruling class over the role of the CIA and the ability of its various components to adapt to the foreign policy shifts required by the White House.

Among those purged from the CIA's top leadership when the scandal first broke, for instance, was James Angleton, a die-hard opponent of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's schemes of colluding as well as contending with the Soviet Union in the Mideast. In addition to being head of counterintelligence, Angleton was also the U.S. liason with the Israeli secret police. This led, according to some reports, to clashes with the secretary of state and finally to Kissinger's demand for his ouster.

Now the continuing struggle is taking on partisan features related to the 1976 presidential race. In passing the investigation into past assassination plots on to the Church committee, for example, Rockefeller seems intent on having the Senate's liberal Democrats face the problem of either covering up or exposing the involvement of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy in CIA attempts to slay Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

Rockefeller, in an effort to fuel suspicion, told the press last week that the reason his panel's report on assassinations was "incomplete" was the fact that two of the main figures were themselves assassinated and that others had "a real problem of amnesia." Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), who Ford considers his most powerful opponent in 1976, denounced the vice president's

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